WEST VIRGINIA CODE: §22A-1-14

§22A-1-14. Director and inspectors authorized to enter mines; duties of inspectors to examine mines; no advance notice of an inspection; reports after fatal accidents.

(a) The director, or his or her authorized representative, has authority to visit, enter, and examine any mine, whether underground or on the surface, and may call for the assistance of any district mine inspector or inspectors whenever assistance is necessary in the examination of any mine. The operator of every coal mine shall furnish the director or his or her authorized representative proper facilities for entering the mine and making examination or obtaining information.

(b) If miners or one of their authorized representatives, have reason to believe, at any time, that dangerous conditions are existing or that the law is not being complied with, they may request the director to have an immediate investigation made: Provided, That miners are always encouraged to work with mine management with regards to safety concerns.

(c) Mine inspectors shall devote their full-time and undivided attention to the performance of their duties, and they shall examine all of the mines in their respective districts at least four times annually, and as often, in addition thereto, as the director may direct, or the necessities of the case or the condition of the mine or mines may require, with no advance notice of inspection provided to any person, and they shall make a personal examination of each working face and all entrances to abandoned parts of the mine where gas is known to liberate, for the purpose of determining whether an imminent danger, referred to in section fifteen of this article, exists in the mine, or whether any provision of article two of this chapter is being violated or has been violated within the past forty-eight hours in the mine. No other person shall, with the intent of undermining the integrity of an unannounced mine inspection, provide advance notice of any inspection or of an inspector's presence at a mine to any person at that mine. Any person who, with the requisite intent, knowingly causes or conspires to provide advance notice of any inspection or of an inspector's presence at a mine is guilty of a felony and, upon conviction thereof, shall be fined not more than $15,000 or imprisoned in a state correctional facility not less than one year and not more than five years, or both fined and imprisoned.

(d) In addition to the other duties imposed by this article and article two of this chapter, it is the duty of each inspector to note each violation he or she finds and issue a finding, order, or notice, as appropriate for each violation so noted. During the investigation of any accident, any violation may be noted whether or not the inspector actually observes the violation and whether or not the violation exists at the time the inspector notes the violation, so long as the inspector has clear and convincing evidence the violation has occurred or is occurring.

(e) An inspector shall require the operator or other employer to investigate all complaints received by the Office of Miners' Health, Safety and Training involving a certified person's substance abuse or alcohol related impairment at a mine. Within thirty days following

www.legislature

notification by the Office of Miners' Health, Safety and Training to the operator or other employer of the complaint, the operator or other employer shall file with the Director a summary of its investigation into the alleged substance abuse or alcohol related impairment of a certified person.

(f) The mine inspector shall visit the scene of each fatal accident occurring in any mine within his or her district and shall make an examination into the particular facts of the accident; make a report to the director, setting forth the results of the examination, including the condition of the mine and the cause or causes of the fatal accident, if known, and all the reports shall be made available to the interested parties, upon written requests.

(g) At the commencement of any inspection of a coal mine by an authorized representative of the director, the authorized representative of the miners at the mine, as well as a salaried employee of management, at the time of the inspection shall be given an opportunity to accompany the authorized representative of the director on the inspection.

WV Legislature